

NORTH CAROLINA COTTON PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

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April 28, 2008

Commissioner Steve Troxler
N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
1001 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1001

Dear Commissioner Troxler,

While the final report of the Program Evaluation Division has not been officially released, the North Carolina Cotton Producers Association, Inc. and its members understand preliminary actions of the Program Evaluation Division suggest a transfer of the Research Station Division from NCDA&CS to the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina with allocation to North Carolina State University. This action causes significant concern to the members of the North Carolina Cotton Producers Association, Inc. You are aware our Association's membership includes all cotton growers across North Carolina. Last year, we provided over \$250,000 to fund critical research at North Carolina State University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences utilizing association funds and funds allocated to us from Cotton, Inc. In conducting this valuable research, we have utilized the research stations managed by both North Carolina State University and NCDA & CS for many years. The operations of these farms, whether under NCSU or NCDA & CS ownership, has created a desirable atmosphere for conducting these studies and has provided North Carolina growers with effective and timely scientific data as well as practical information.

It has come to our attention the Program Evaluation Division, as requested by the N.C. General Assembly, is ready to issue a report back to the N.C. General Assembly with its recommendations. As a major commodity group representing over 3,000 growers across the state and a large supporter of both the NCSU Research Programs and the NCDA & CS Research Station Division, we have not been requested to provide our input and recommendations as part of the process that has occurred.

Specific areas of concerns to our state's cotton growers include:

- The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina is not aware of rural agriculture interests and has interests far from those of production agriculture in the state.

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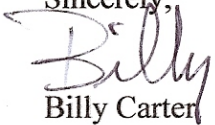
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- The sale of land should only be conducted after careful consideration of the future and consider the intent of those who gave the property to the state initially. This proposal would eliminate the input of farmers, commodity groups, local taxpayers, and even elected state legislators and allow the Board of Governors, after only reporting to the legislature, to make the decision to divest the state's interest in valuable farm land. Further, this process does not seem to fit in with farmland preservation efforts of the state.
- Apparently, after being told we would, the stake holders, farmers, commodity groups and other interested parties have had little input into the proposed recommendations and we still feel that more information and background should have been given to all involved.
- The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services should have the opportunity to be tied to all of agriculture through the Research Stations Division in order to maintain the close tie to thousands of farmers across the state and to give a voice to all farmers.

We are concerned over with any recommendations related to transfer of NCDA&CS Research Stations Division. As a stake holder in this process, we feel that cotton research has been given little consideration. If we as an organization can assist the Department in solving the issue, please let us know.

Sincerely,


Billy Carter
EVP

CC/ Ronnie Burleson, President
NCCPA Board of Directors